

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 OMB-01

SAB-01 /057 W

----- 001085

P R 211159Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PIROIRITY 2989

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2342

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, LE

SUBJ: LEBANESE REQUEST FOR HOWITZERS

REFS: (A) STATE 037104 (B) BEIRUT 2092

1. EMBASSY SUPPORTS LEBANESE REQUEST FOR 24 SELF PROPELLED 155 MM HOWITZERS. LEBANESE ARMY IS ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN THEM FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES AS PART OF PLANNED ARMY EXPANSION AND MECHANIZATION. REQUEST FOR THE GUNS HAS BEEN SENT TO BOTH THE U.S. AND THE FRENCH. THE REQUEST IS NOT A NEW ONE AS A SIMILAR REQUEST WAS MADE TWO YEARS AGO BUT WAS DROPPED BY THE LEBANESE BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS AT THE TIME. CURRENTLY THE LEBANESE ARMY, ACCORDING TO MINDEF SKAFF, HAS BEEN PROMISED SUFFICIENT FUNDS BY THE ARAB LEAGUE COUNTRIES TO MAKE THE PURCHASE (REFTEL B).

2. IT SHOULD BE EXPLAINED THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED MANY TIMES WITH LEBANESE ARMY THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF TOWED VS SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS, POINTING OUT THAT THE TOWED ARE CHEAPER, MORE QUICKLY AVAILABLE AND EASIER TO MAINTAIN. GOL, HOWEVER, HAS DECIDED THAT FOR ITS OWN REASONS IT WANTS SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS, AND THERE IS REALLY NO POINT IN OUR TRYING TO ARGUE THE CASE AGAIN.

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3. DATT ADVISES US THAT SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS MAKE SENSE IN TERMS OF EXPANDED, MECHANIZED LEBANESE ARMY. IN FACT, SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS WOULD BE FIRST STEP IN GIVING COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS EQUAL MOBILITY WITH MECHANIZED INFANTRY. WE CONSEQUENTLY RECOMMEND THAT USG RESPOND QUICKLY TO THE REQUEST AND HOPEFULLY WITH ATTRACTIVE DELIVERY DATES. AS FAR AS POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS SALE IS CONCERNED, WE BELIEVE ADEQUATE BASIS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR RECENT REPORTING ON SUBJECT OF GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON.  
HOUGHTON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** MILI, MASS, LE, US  
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